

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) A method of answering a question based on information stored on a computer-readable medium comprising the steps of

~~receiving- parsing~~ a question;

~~parsing the question to obtain~~ generating an analyzed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

~~matching the analyzed question to a set identifying at least one of~~  
predetermined question patterns including a second identification of a syntactic category  
matching the first identification of a syntactic category to obtain one or more matched question  
patterns;

transforming the one or more ~~matched-identified~~ question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, said transforming including matching each of the ~~identified matched~~ question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations describe syntactic variations of one or more terms included in the question;

generating partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and

obtaining answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the transforming step further comprises:

transforming matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements using syntactic frames.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
collecting answers from matching the partially unspecified queries across a plurality of documents in the stored information.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
ranking each obtained answer according to its frequency of matching.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the stored information comprises a set of documents and an index identifying which documents within the set of documents contain terms or groups of terms answering the partially unspecified queries.

6. – 31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein generating said partially unspecified queries further includes:

replacing a generic syntactic or morphological category with one or more corresponding elements from the question.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a first of said partially unspecified statements is transformed into more than one partially unspecified queries in accordance with a mapping of a question word to more than one corresponding partially unspecified term.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of answering a question comprising the steps of:

~~receiving~~ parsing a question;

~~parsing the question to obtain~~ generating an analyzed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

~~identifying at least one matching the analyzed question to a set of~~  
predetermined question patterns including a second identification of a syntactic category  
~~matching the first identification of a syntactic category to obtain one or more matched question~~  
patterns;

transforming the one or more ~~matched~~ identified question patterns into one or  
more partially unspecified statements, said transforming including matching each of the  
~~matched~~ identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding  
to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified  
statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined  
transformations represent affirmative statement patterns corresponding to said one or more  
matched question patterns;

generating partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially  
unspecified statements; and

obtaining answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored  
information.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein said partially unspecified  
statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

37. (Currently amended) A computer program product for answering a question  
comprising code that:

~~receives~~ parses a question;

~~parses the question to obtain~~ generates an analyzed question including a first  
identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

~~matches the analyzed question to a set of identifying at least one predetermined question patterns including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category to obtain one or more matched question patterns;~~

~~transforms the one or more identified matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, said code that transforms including code that matches each of the identified matched question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations describe syntactic variations of one or more terms included in the question;~~

~~generates partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and~~

~~obtains answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.~~

38. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein the code that transforms the one or more matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, further comprises:

code that transforms matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements using syntactic frames.

39. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 37, further code that:

collects answers from matching the partially unspecified queries across a plurality of documents in the stored information.

40. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 37, further comprising code that:

    ranks each obtained answer according to its frequency of matching.

41. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein the stored information comprises a set of documents and an index identifying which documents within the set of documents contain terms or groups of terms answering the partially unspecified queries.

42. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 37, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

43. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 37, wherein said code that generates said partially unspecified queries further includes code that:

    replaces a generic syntactic or morphological category with one or more corresponding elements from the question.

44. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 37, wherein a first of said partially unspecified statements is transformed into more than one partially unspecified queries in accordance with a mapping of a question word to more than one corresponding partially unspecified term.

45. (Currently amended) A computer program product for answering a question based on information stored on a computer-readable medium comprising code that:

~~receives~~ parses a question;

~~parses the question to obtain~~ generates an analyzed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

~~identifying at least one matches the analyzed question to a set of predetermined question patterns including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category to obtain one or more matched question patterns;~~

~~transforms the one or more identified matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, said code that transforms including code that matches each of the identified matched question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations are affirmative statement patterns corresponding to said one or more matched question patterns;~~

~~generates partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and~~

~~obtains answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.~~

46. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of Claim 45, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.